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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/795,776

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David P. Johnson

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EXAMINER

PICH, PONNOREAY

ART UNIT

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2135

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PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/795,776	Applicant(s) JOHNSON ET AL.	
	Examiner PONNOREAY PICH	Art Unit 2135	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 23 July 2008.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 7/23/08 has been entered.

Claims 1-21 are pending.

Response to Amendment and Arguments

Applicant's amendments and argument directed at the amended claims were fully considered, but are moot in view of new rejections made in response to the amendments. Any objections or rejections not repeated for record are withdrawn due to the amendments.

Claim Objections

Claims 1-3, 9-10, and 16-17 are is objected to because of the following informalities:

1. "solution" in line 5 of claim 1 should be "solutions".
2. "said software solution" in claims 2-3, 9-10, and 16-17 should be "said one or more software solutions" since independent claims 1, 8, and 15 from which these claims depend have been amended to recite "one or more software solutions" instead.
3. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1, 8, and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reshef et al (US 2003/0233581) in view of Magdych et al (US 7,096,503).

Claims 1, 8, and 15:

As per claim 1, Reshef discloses:

1. Analyzing by an agent (i.e. analysis engine 20, see paragraph 20) one or more software solutions (i.e. application) to identify legal and illegal external interfaces thereto (paragraphs 23-25, 34, 55, 67, and 97). *The cited paragraphs discuss how Reshef's invention analyzes an application to identify the application's interfaces with external clients. The identified interfaces are further analyzed to identify any possible vulnerabilities, i.e. illegal external interfaces, which may be used to access the application via mutated requests.*
2. Attempting to access each of said one or more software solutions using the identified illegal external interfaces (paragraphs 10, 25, and 37). *The cited sections discuss how Reshef's invention attempts to access the application using possible illegal external interfaces via mutated requests.*

3. Storing a record of any illegal external interfaces that allow access to said one or more software solutions at a database associated with said agent (paragraphs 26-27 and 35). *Note that a record of successful attacks is stored in database 18. These successful attacks are indication of illegal external interfaces that allow access to the application.*

Reshef does not explicitly disclose the method is used in a distributed computing environment, the analyzing is done by a plurality of agents, the record is stored at a plurality of databases associated with said plurality of agents, and wherein for each of said one or more software solutions, at least one separate agent is utilized.

However, Magdych discloses a distributed computing environment (Fig 2), wherein analyzing for vulnerabilities is done by a plurality of agents (col 3, lines 4-9 and col 4, lines 12-32). Note that Magdych's invention has an agent installed on each local computer which analyzes the software of the local computer for vulnerabilities and each agent may be tailored to each specific local computer. Magdych further discloses a record is stored at a plurality of databases associated with said plurality of agents (col 6, lines 60-65). In the cited section, each agent creates a log of their respective scan, which can be considered a database containing a record of the scan. Since there are multiple logs kept by multiple agents, there is a plurality of databases associated with said plurality of agents. Magdych further discloses wherein for each of said one or more software solutions, at least one separate agent is utilized (col 3, lines 4-9 and col 4, lines 12-32). Each local computer has a customized agent installed for scanning for

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vulnerabilities for a specific local computer. These agents may be customized using various modules.

At the time applicant's invention was made, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to utilize Reshef's invention according to the limitations recited in claim 1 based on Magdych's teachings. One skilled would have done so by modifying Reshef's invention such that it could have agents installed remotely on local computers as per Magdych's teachings, wherein each agent scans each local computer's applications for vulnerabilities. Note that Reshef's invention relates to detecting security flaws with a web site (paragraph 4). One skilled in the art should appreciate that a web site may be hosted on multiple computers, thus incorporating Magdych's teachings within Reshef's invention would allow for a network-based risk assessment tool which could detect vulnerabilities in all the computers used to host a particular web site. Note that Magdych discloses that there was a known need in the art for a network-based risk-assessment tool (col 1, lines 55-56).

Claims 8 and 15 recite limitations substantially similar to what is recited in claim 1 and are rejected for similar reasons. The difference between the claims is that claim 8 is directed towards a system comprising a processor and means to perform the method of claim 1 while claim 15 is directed towards a computer program product comprising computer-readable storage medium having computer-readable program code to perform the method of claim 1. Note that since both Reshef and Magdych's invention are computer implemented, a processor executing software contained in a computer

readable storage medium to implement their methods are inherent to both their inventions.

Claims 2, 9, and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reshef et al (US 2003/0233581) in view of Magdych et al (US 7,096,503) in further view of applicant's admittance of prior art, herein referred to as AAPA.

Claims 2, 9, and 16:

Reshef does not explicitly disclose wherein said one or more software solutions comprises at least two independent software programs interacting to form said one or more software solutions. However, AAPA discloses that it was well known for software solutions to comprise at least two independent software programs interacting to form one or more software solutions (specification: paragraph 2).

At the time applicant's invention was made, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to utilize Reshef's invention to secure a software solution which comprises at least two independent software programs interacting to form said one or more software solutions. One skilled would have been motivated to do so because Reshef recognizes that securing vulnerabilities at the network level is insufficient and there also exists a need to ensure security at the application level (paragraphs 6-7). Using Reshef with the prior art software solution would provide an automated way of ensuring application level security and would provide an organization with a repeatable and potentially cost-effective process for conducting application/software security audits (paragraph 27).

Claims 3-6, 10-13, and 17-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reshef et al (US 2003/0233581) in view of Magdych et al (US 7,096,503) in further view of Neelay et al (US 2004/0064722).

Claims 3, 10, and 17:

Reshef does not explicitly disclose automatically deploying a corrective measure to said one or more software solutions based upon said identified illegal external interface. However, after Reshef's invention performs its analysis, a report is generated for purposes of recommending fixes for vulnerabilities, i.e. identified illegal external interfaces, discovered (paragraph 27). Further, Neelay discloses of an automated system of deploying corrective measures that neutralizes vulnerabilities (paragraph 20).

Based on Neelay's further teachings, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to further modify Reshef's invention such that it automatically deployed corrective measures to the software solution based on identified illegal external interfaces. One skilled would have been motivated to do so because automatically deploying corrective measures would promote security since any delays in application of the corrective measure is a window of opportunity for an attack against the software solution which may succeed.

The claimed invention is also not patentable because the incorporation of Neelay's teachings of automated patching to Reshef's known invention, which is ready for improvement, yields a predictable result. Note that Neelay discloses that after

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identifying vulnerability in a computer's software, manual installation of corrective measures could result in unnecessary delays. Based on Reshef's teachings alone, one skilled should appreciate that Reshef's invention is an invention which is ready for improvement since he does not discuss in what manner the discovered vulnerabilities are dealt with. Incorporating Neelay's teachings of automated patching for vulnerabilities to Reshef's invention would yield a predictable result of a system which automatically scans applications for vulnerabilities, such as illegal external interfaces, and automatically patch those vulnerabilities.

Claims 4, 11, and 18:

Reshef further discloses storing each of said corrective measures in a memory (paragraph 27). The report 402 provided by Reshef's invention suggests corrective measures, i.e. fixes. Writing these corrective measures to a report reads on storing the corrective measures in a memory.

Note that Neelay also discloses the limitation (paragraph 27). The installation of the patches to fix detected vulnerabilities means that the corrective measures were written to a memory, i.e. stored to memory.

Claims 5, 12, and 20:

Reshef implicitly discloses making said stored record of illegal external interfaces that allow access available to all users of said detection and correction method/system/computer program product (paragraphs 27 and 69). In the cited paragraphs, Reshef discloses that public databases that publish known vulnerabilities that anyone can access were well known in the art at the time applicant's invention was

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made (paragraph 69). The purpose of such databases was so that other users with similar systems could learn about new vulnerabilities that someone else may have discovered and take appropriate actions against the vulnerabilities. Since Reshef's invention generates a report of illegal external interfaces that allow access to an application, one skilled would expect that at the time applicant's invention was made, the public databases would be utilized to alert other users with similar software solutions of any new vulnerabilities discovered using Reshef's invention.

Reshef does not explicitly disclose making said stored record of corrective measures available to all users of said detection and correction method/system/computer program product. However, the limitation is obvious over Neelay's teachings of providing a server from which patches for software vulnerabilities could be downloaded (paragraphs 8 and 23). From this teaching, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to make stored record of corrective measures available to users of Reshef's modified invention globally.

At the time applicant's invention was made, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to further modify Reshef's invention such that the stored record of illegal external interfaces that allow access and the stored record of corrective measures were available to all users globally. One skilled would have been motivated to do so because making such information available to other global users would increase the chance that other users become aware of newly discovered problems and patch their systems.

Claims 6, 13, and 20:

Claims 6, 13, and 20 recite limitations substantially similar to claims 5, 12, and 19. The main difference is that claims 6, 13, and 20 further recite that the records are made available on a global basis via a network connection. However, the records being made available globally via network connection is obvious to Reshef's modified invention as discussed in the rejection of claims 5, 12, and 19. Note that the databases disclosed by Reshef used to publish known vulnerabilities were made available on a global basis via network connection (paragraph 69). Neelay's server from which patches can be downloaded is also available on a global basis via a network connection as implied from a user downloading patches from a server.

Claims 7, 14, and 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reshef et al (US 2003/0233581) in view of Magdych et al (US 7,096,503) in further view of Cedar et al (US 2003/0236994).

Claims 7, 14, and 21:

Reshef further discloses mapping each legal and illegal external interface into a machine-readable format (paragraphs 35-37). Note that in Reshef's invention, automated analysis of the application is performed whereby Reshef's invention discovers legal and illegal external interfaces into the application. This information is then used to by attack engine 22 to attack the interfaces to see if access is allowed. The attack engine is a software program, thus this implies that the legal and illegal

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external interfaces were mapped into a machine-readable format since the attack engine was able to make use of the information to try to attack the application being tested.

Reshef does not explicitly disclose analyzing an XML description of each legal and illegal external interface. However, use of XML files to store the result of security analysis was well known in the art as evidenced by Cedar (paragraph 67).

At the time applicant's invention was made, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Reshef's invention such that after analyzing the application to discover legal and illegal external interfaces, the result was written to an XML file using XML description. As such, when the attack engine tries to attack the application, it must analyze the XML description of each legal and illegal external interface which was generated to determine how to attack the system. One skilled would have been motivated to use an XML file as database 18 as disclosed by Reshef to store the description of each legal and illegal external interface because XML is a portable data format which allows the resultant file to be viewed by many different available public API's (Cedar: paragraph 69). This allows flexibility in the design of Reshef's attack engine since it could utilize many publicly available API's.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to PONNOREAY PICH whose telephone number is (571) 272-7962. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:00am-4:30pm Mon-Thurs.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Kim Vu can be reached on 571-272-3859. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Ponnoreay Pich/
Examiner, Art Unit 2135